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P O E M S

BY

PAUL H. HAYNE.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

MDCCC LV

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B O S T O N :

THURSTON AND TORRY, PRINTERS.

DEDICATORY SONNET.

To Thee, dear Angel of my cherished home,
Thou fair Ideal of my youth's delight,
Whose all-embracing love, serene and bright,
Circles my being, as the heavenly dome
Encircles earth, I dedicate these lays,
My Fancy's first, weak offerings ; to thy heart,
O ! gentle Critic, shall thy Poet turn,
Should colder Censors shut the gate of praise,
Where, when his golden hopes have ceased to burn,
And high Ambitions one by one depart,
He knows the Solace, and the balm repose,
To heal life's deepest wounds, and leave him—blest ;
For shrinèd there, th' exhaustless fountain flows
Of that grand faith, whose gift is — perfect rest.



NOTE.

THE principal Poem in this little volume is founded upon a legend, which sprung from the horror of the early Christian Church for what it deemed the abominations of the Greek and Roman Theogonies, especially the deification of Love, as exemplified in the conception of Venus. With a strange misapprehension of the beautiful myth which originally invested that Goddess with a charm far higher and purer than any it would be possible to extract from the embodiment of mere sensual passion, the 'Fathers' were studiously careful to instil into the minds of their pupils and followers an utter loathing for the very name of one, who, elevated by Hesiod and Homer to celestial honors, was degraded by Augustine and Chrysostom to the level of a fiend. This idea generated the belief which, with many modifications, continued to subsist as far down as the twelfth century, that Venus, establishing her abode in the heart of beautiful and solitary locations, waylaid Christian pilgrims and travellers, and having seduced them to her enchanted Palace, completed their ruin by the employment of every art of voluptuous fascination. When her triumph was perfected, she abandoned disguises, and revealing her

true character of a devil, the tragedy ended of course in a brimstone conflagration. Having no fancy for a melodramatic termination like this, I have endeavored to give to the legend a deeper moral significance, to enforce the truth that the apotheosis of the Sense is the funeral of the Soul, and that in the maelstrom of the passions, virtue and happiness are sure to go down together.

There is a poem by Richard Monckton Milnes, entitled the 'Northern Knight in Italy,' brought to my notice after most of the ensuing verses were written, of which this legend of Venus also forms the groundwork. This discovery did not deter me from the prosecution of my own poem, as I conceive that such traditions are common property. It is for the reader to say, whether, in the treatment of the subject, there is evidence sufficient to sustain the charge, so fashionable in these days, of plagiarism.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE TEMPTATION OF VENUS.

A MONKISH LEGEND.

I

BROAD in the tempered rays of the red sun,
The Egyptian desert glittered leagues away,
Great clouds of floating dust, confused and dun,
Hung heavy on the haggard brow of Day,
And veiled the fiery light of that fierce clime,
As Centuries veil the land's mysterious prime.

II.

The parchèd palms stood motionless and mute,
To plead the breezes' coming ; the still sky
Looked heedless on the melancholy suit,
Nor sent the faintest wind to breathe reply ;
Nature had sunk to dumbness ; no sweet voice
Bade the dull soul of solitude rejoice.

III.

And near the horizon, a broad band of beams,
Dulled by the fog of sands, was bound upon
The forehead of the sickly Eve, the gleams
Of whose wild eyes, all desolate, and wan,
Glowed fitfully, and with that gloomy glare,
Which lights the looks of passionless despair.

IV.

No fleet bird flying to its nightly nest,
Piped a low, homeward note of innocent glee,
But by the waning portals of the West,
As rising to some dim Eternity,
A single eagle towered in lonely state,
Fronting the lurid sunset's gorgeous gate.

V.

And placid through the silence and the waste,
A haunted realm of immemorial years,
By solemn mysteries, and sad shades embraced,
Where phantom Fable her weird aspect rears,
And the dead Ages' ghosts in shadowy might,
And shrouded grandeur, wander into Night,

VI.

Roll the still waters of the 'breezeless'¹ Nile,
Like an old dream through a dismantled brain,
That faintly brings the sunlight, and the smile,
And the far memories of its youth again ;
A vision of the desert ; a sublime
Memento mori of the eldest time.

VII.

A furlong from the stream's remotest edge,
The rude walls of a convent rose from out
A mass of circumambient rocks, whose ledge,
By a thin belt of green was girt about ;
A place of peaceful prayer and pious rest,
Whose sacred bounds a special saint had blest :

VIII.

That holy man of God, whose awful zeal
Struck pale the cheek of many an anchorite,
Who knew his own faith cold, and could *but* feel,
In the great blaze of Simeon's steadfast light
Of grand endurance, that the hope was dim,
Which promised Heaven to feeble souls, like him.

IX.

This sombre evening, when the vesper-psalm
Had fainted to an echo, sad and low,
There thrilled upon the passive season's calm,
A dreary, deathlike wail of sudden wo,
That left the shocked sense, quivering as it past
On the hot wings of the delirious blast.

X.

The startled monks looked forth in haste to see
What demon was abroad. Lo ! the wide Heaven,
A moment since, expanded tranquilly,
Now seemed from its serene foundations riven,
And tossed in clouds of chaos ; horrid loom
The ghastly eyeballs of the dread SIMOOM.

XI.

And folded in his arms' Titanic sweep,
A hapless caravan of doomèd men,
Rent the red air from fiery deep to deep,
With frenzied cries, his breath soon stilled again ;
And when his flaming fury vanished by,
There was no sign of life beneath the sky.

XII.

Yet while the monks stood gazing with the awe
Of speechless horror blazoned on each face,
From the spent outskirts of the storm, they saw
Two shapes emerge — reeling beyond the place
Of doom and desolation — hand in hand,
They staggered from the burning pall of sand.

XIII.

Then, the good Fathers' hospitable doors
Were backward dashed, and a loud shout of cheer,
Such as, perchance, those lone, lethargic shores
Had never roused before, rang silver-clear,
And, like some rescuing Angel's tender call,
Wedded with music from celestial hall,

XIV.

Smote on the Wanderers' hearing — a new strength
Upbraced the sinking limb, the glimmering sight
Grew lucid with fresh hope, until at length
Saved from the wingèd Pestilence, their flight
Was stayed, and Death's insatiate eyes
Were turned from those he falsely deemed his prize.

XV.

The one, a graceful woman, the fine mould
Of whose pale beauty, pointed to the land
Of Helen, the divine — a cross of gold
Shone on her bosom, whence the winds had fanned
Her garment slightly, and revealed the snow
Of the rare loveliness that heaved below.

XVI.

Beside her clung a boy, whose tender age
Scarce filled a lustrum — through the starting tear,
Gleamed his full, luminous eye — the terrible rage
Of the late storm had left a touch of fear
Upon his marble forehead, and the strife
Sent the warm blood back to the seat of life.

XVII.

A wounded rose and rose-bud linked together,
Borne by a tempest from Arcadian vales,
And dropped within a realm of burning weather,
Where the bloom withers, and the music fails;
This gentle pair a kindly friendship wooed,
And Christian care made bright the solitude.

XVIII.

But ere a single moon did wax and wane,
The mother melted in the Peace above,
As stars melt from the morning's purple plain ;
Ere lost in light, one pang her mortal love
Struck to the parting soul, and dimmed its way
A moment, to the Kingdom of the Day.

XIX.

I need not tell how, in that desolate home,
The boy aspired to manhood, how the flowers
Of a most noble nature 'neath the dome
Of sheltering love, bloomed through the lonely hours,
White, fragrant, beautiful, — so, had he then
Translated been from this low sphere of men,

XX.

And borne among the Angels, even there,
He might have stood on equal terms with them,
Undazzled, walked in Heaven's auroral air,
And worn unquestioned Heaven's high diadem,
For Faith's pure fires had made his heart their shrine,
And fused his human-life in God's divine.

XXI.

But when was ever known, since Time began,
A Paradise of soul that did not lie
Open to every desperate foe of man,
To curse with crime, or blast with treachery ?
Philemon learned the mournful truth too late,
The spirit's weakness, and the serpent's hate.

XXII.

And so, it chanced, when eighteen summers showed
Their mellowing glory on his brow of peace,
One morn, when less intense the sunlight glowed,
And the still stream, in joyance of release
From its hot kisses, rippled to the strand,
With a low monotone, serene and bland ;

XXIII.

Philemon, in a meditative maze
Of happy fancies wandering, reached a spot,
Beyond the bounds of his accustomed ways,
Where the grim desert Genius lingered not,
Whose bloom the lavish Spring dropped as she flew
Through the still æther, deepening all the blue.

XXIV.

A vale of greenery 'mid the sterile blight,
Sheltered by two great hillocks, with a crown
Of palm-trees fronting northward ; still and bright
Looked the oasis ; a rill trickled down
Right through the heart of the sweet place, and made
A murmurous melody, — Philemon strayed

XXV.

Where the waves lured him, until suddenly
Beside a fountain, the glad rivulet's source,
Where every gentle thing was wont to flee
From the noon's sullen glare, or tempest's force,
Like a grey grandsire, by a prattling child,
A shadowy ruin rose from out the wild.²

XXVI.

Near it, there lay half-buried in the drift,
Swathing the columns and the portico,
Statues of Grecian gods, that mutely lift
Their sad, discrownèd honors in the glow
Of mocking skies — each desecrated form,
The plaything of the alternate sun and storm.

XXVII.

With trembling limbs, and a new sense of wrong,
Philemon shrank by the strange idols nigh,
Entered the porch irresolute, and long
Doubted, if safe it were to feast the eye
More closely on this spectacle — at last,
Crushing a fear, the threshold-steps were past.

XXVIII.

He reached a room of model strictly Greek,
Supported by Corinthian shafts, that rose
(Cast in the fairest form of the antique)
With that ærial lightness of repose,
Which crowns the perfect grace — th' ideal wrought
In the clear depths of true artistic Thought.

XXIX.

Around, the storied walls were thickly hung
With master-works of the Hellenic mind,
The embodied lays the ancient Poets sung,
Ere the gross world was stricken fancy-blind,
And men in elemental Nature saw
Glory and Love, not the cold gleam of Law.

XXX.

But life-like and magnificent beyond
Aught else enshrined there, the Image starts
Of HER, the ever-young, the fair, the fond,
Whose empire is the universe of hearts,
Whose influence, all-pervading and all seeing,
Glows, like a golden joy, round Nature's being.

XXXI.

O! Venus Aphrodite! the sole birth
Of perfect passion, and enduring love,
Vouchsafed to excommunicate from earth
All other creeds of beauty, and to prove
The rapturous homage at thy happy shrine,
The one, grand faith of men, all deem divine :

XXXII.

O! Venus Aphrodite! when the wave
Of the becalmed Ægean brought the Day
A vision of that glory the Gods gave,
Humanity's rough edge to melt away,
The winds grew mute, the thrilled tides owned thy might,
Thou Incarnation of the world's delight.

XXXIII.

The Sun, from his blue realm of air, looked down
Into thine eyes' supreme beatitude,
And formed about thy shining hair, a crown
Of many rays ; the Hours their haste subdued,
To robe thee in transparent vestments drawn
From the far woof of the ascending Dawn.

XXXIV.

See where she moves ! the delegated Queen
Of sunny shapes, sweet moods, and heavenly thought,
Filling the Air with halos, — a serene
Soul, from the great depths of being brought
To vitalize Creation, and to stir
The Heaven and Earth alike to worship her.

XXXV.

See where she moves ! her white arms wreathed around
The daintiest of the Graces, her sweet glance
Most eloquent in meaning, though no sound
Of song or speech hath broken yet the trance
Of the lulled Ocean, and her rosy mouth
Breathes only the fine odors of the South.³

XXXVI.

What wonder that Philemon oft repairs
To worship this new Deity ; to steep
His spirit in enchantment, till the years
Of a full vigorous manhood rise, and leap
Full-armed upon him, powerful to succeed
In dragging Faith from canticle and creed.

XXXVII.

Thus, when the time was ripe, the legend saith,
That wondrous picture's sweet original,
With honeyed words, and music-laden breath,
Came to complete Philemon's hapless fall ;
Eager he sprung, subdued to her command,
And past with her, to Love's Elysian-land.

XXXVIII.

Two milk-white chargers bore them to the home
Of Faërie, on a lustrous night in June,
Glance the fleet steeds beneath the alternate dome
Of sky and forest, pallid with the moon,
Speeding with phantom swiftness on the wind,
Which, sometimes baffled, seemed to moan behind.

XXXIX.

At length, they entered on a wilderness
Of dusky foliage and a gloom severe,
Which, like the clinging horror of distress,
Hung round the trees, — a girding ghost of fear —
The tutelar Genius of a dismal realm,
No tide of rays from sun, or star, could overwhelm.

XL.

Yet sudden, 'mid the dimness of the wood,
A radiance like the flush of vernal eves,
Stole warmly through the sombre solitude,
And played in purple on the glimmering leaves ;
Slowly in lessening shadows, waned the night,
Pervaded by that rich, voluptuous light.

XLI.

How shall I picture the supreme amaze
With which — an open pathway having won —
Philemon rode into the mellowed blaze,
Like muffled beams of a thin-clouded sun —
That shone from a broad Palace, lifting there
Its unimagined wonders in the air —

. XLII.

Dome piled on dome continuous, filled the sky,
With a crystalline lustre, whose clear hue,
As it receded heavenward, dreamily,
Like a far constellation gemmed the blue —
That drank a nebulous lustre from the spires,
Remotely raised, where pale the mystic fires.

XLIII.

In voiceless admiration gazed the youth,
On such supernal beauty ; not in dreams,
Or most fantastic mockeries of the truth,
Upreared by Fancy, had the feeblest gleams
Of a like splendor shone, presaging thence
This stately and serene magnificence.

. XLIV.

They reached the court-yard, and dismounting, past
Up a grand marble stairway, flooded o'er
With a glad, golden glory from the vast
Interior chambers streaming evermore,
Like the Aurora, glittering to and fro,
Across a pallid solitude of snow —

. XLV.

When the last step was gained, a massive door
With faint, melodious thunder rolled apart,
And, standing on a rare, mosaic floor,
Circled by dazzling plenitudes of art,
Philemon paused, o'erburdened with excess
Of novel and bewildering loveliness.

. XLVI.

Soft in his ear a silvery accent sighs,
'Advance with me, and share my fond endeavor
To tread the mazes of this Paradise,
Which I have promised shall be yours forever ;
That you may meet, blest mortal, face to face,
Th' entrancing secrets of this marvellous place.'

XLVII.

She seized his hand, and at that moment swelled
A strain of thrilling music overhead,
Sweet as the supernatural lays that spelled
Earth's daughters, ere Time's early bloom was dead,
When Angels wooed them, and the 'rapt sky rung
Harmonious echoes to the heavenly tongue.

XLVIII.

These notes dissolving in a genial shower,
Fell from a cloud of ever-varying glow,
That where the temple's loftiest arches tower,
Had been upborne from incense shrines below,
And veiled within whose breast, some God of song,
Outpoured a soul whose love had suffered wrong.

XLIX.

It rose, a passionate sea of stormy sounds,
And soared, till the vast area overflowed ;
Then, bursting from the building's jealous bounds,
Too narrow for its frenzy, it bestowed
Its wild, tumultuous surges on the breeze,
That swept — a tempest thundering through the trees.

L.

And next, it sank, and sank, like ebbing tides
By the still marge of Ocean, when the Moon
Hath lulled the rippling waste whereon she rides
Triumphant to the Night's unclouded noon,
And a scarce visible heaving stirs the deep,
Whose charmèd waves are dreaming in their sleep.

LI.

Again it changes ; and in frolic glee,
The flowing of a soft and fairy measure,
Gushes upon the senses soothingly,
And steeps them in a dreamy mist of pleasure,
Recalling woodland bowers in vernal weather,
When you and Love first wandered forth together :

LII.

A silver rill of most mellifluous strain,
Receding to a whisper, faint and far —
Lessened — then lost — as in the blue domain
Of distance quenched, the glory of a star —
Left a dead, desert silence, all athirst
To drink in life from a fresh music-burst.

LIII.

Soft in Philemon's ear the Temptress sighs,
'Advance with me, for thou hast only passed
The threshold of these pleasing mysteries,
And but a tithe of the sweet lore amassed,
With which I mean to charge thy earnest soul,
As clouds are charged with lightning, and control

LIV.

The springs of subtler sympathies, than ere
Have henceforth ruled thy being ; a new sense,
The motion of a longing, sweet and rare,
Shall crownèd be with full intelligence,
Removing from thy life the desert ban,
To teach the power, and bring the bliss of man.'

LV.

And on through the tall colonnades they went,
With linkèd hands, Philemon's eyes of fire,
Dashed with the dews of madness, strangely blent
With sense of sights bewildering, — the desire
Of further knowledge, and the looks that shine
In his Guide's glance, flushed as with fiery wine.

LVI.

And now they reached a fountain's marbled brink,
And now they stood in rapture by the tide,
Where starry flowers were bending down to drink
Fresh beauty from the waters fair and wide,
Whose tremulous spray shot up as if in doubt,
Lest the grand rainbow dreams should struggle out.

LVII.

While thus he paused, inhaling the fine mist,
The balmy coolness of the great parterre,
Slowly the clouds of gold and amethyst
Unrolled their splendid vans along the air ;
And burst another vision on his brain,
Whose very glory brought a touch of pain.

LVIII.

A vision of bright women — dancing girls,
And sylphs of lightsome action and soft grace,
Enwreathèd with the whiteness of pure pearls,
Perfect in limb, and exquisite in face,
Poised, as if looking for a sign to mount
In rhythmic measures round that mystic fount.

LIX.

And the sign came ! — a clash of cymbals grand,
And the whole dazzling throng, with glancing feet,
Darted like shining arrows from the hand
Of a God-Archer, into circles fleet
Of matchless symmetry, and wanton art,
That snared the sense, to desecrate the heart.

LX.

Philemon gazed till he could gaze no more,
And fell, struck blind with passion ; in his ears
There seemed to sound the liberated roar
Of the young blood, so stagnant kept for years
Of bald Egyptian solitude, and so
The stormier now in its unfettered flow.

LXI.

Soft in his ear a silvery accent sighs,
' Advance with me — diviner secrets yet
Await to crown the wonder in thine eyes,
Already on the sweet fruition set
Of this, our wild Elysium of all joy,
Which Time can never blight, nor Death destroy.'

LXII.

And the fond arm that now but touched his own,
Stole like a zone of fire about his breast ;
Uplifted from the purple-veinèd stone,
O'ermastered still by a supreme unrest,
He wandered with the dame down dim arcades,
And the mild gloom of immemorial shades :

LXIII.

There, brooded Twilights of a hundred dyes,
Caught from the sunsets of those lands of balm,
Where deathless Summer radiates through the skies
And spreads below her an immortal calm ;
Through the dun shadows countless pinions plied,
And a Song-Spirit warbled by his side.

LXIV.

They reach a grotto, bowered about with vines,
Whence gleam the luscious grapes thro' the dusk rays,
Like sapphire globes of a soft flame, that shrines
The subtle essence the wine-votaries praise,
And there, through bars of deepening verdure glows
A sensuous mystery of divine repose.

LXV.

The full-orbed Moon is setting in the West,
Flooding the landscape with a Sea of splendor,
The wanton Wind faints on the rose's breast
In delicate dalliance, tremulous and tender,
And a serene and silvery haze is spread
Among the tranquil spaces overhead.

LXVI.

O! most bewitching Hour of all the Hours,
The rugged, common Time is not thy Sire,
Thou stealest forth from the voluptuous flowers,
Born of their passion, and the starry fire
Flushed o'er them, as a God's love bathed of old,
A mortal maid in a rich rain of gold.

LXVII.

'Philemon! my Philemon!' how the tone
Thrilled through him with a tender power to thrall!
His scrupulous Fears, those guardian Saints, have flown,
And bared to the base Evil now, is all
His plastic nature; — the long strife is past,
And the mad victim blindly yields at last.

LXVIII.

So, on the dewy atmosphere, outgushed
A world of sighs, whose amorous plenitude
Stole to the Nightingale's green home, where hushed,
And dreaming, drooped the Minstrel of the Wood,
And set the music, sleep had frozen, free,
In tropic tides of tender harmony.

LXIX.

The mellowed splash of fountains — the low breeze,
That fitful rose, and sank, and died away,
With scarce an answering whisper from the trees,
Awed by the passion of that wondrous lay,
Came, the first cloud of his soul's tempest spent,
With a strange sense of drowsy languishment :

LXX.

But ever, if perchance on the unrest,
And rosy riot of his heart, there fell
The gleam of a pure thought, the Temptress guessed
Its presence and its purport, and too well
Plied the potential magic of that charm,
Whose fiery poison worked the deadly harm.

LXXI.

And thus, from day to day, from week to week,
From shameless month to month, the potion fed
On blood of brain and body, till the cheek
Grew colorless, and the sapped soul was dead,
Through whose dried branches to Decay resigned,
Remorse rushed howling, like a hollow wind.

LXXII.

The pestilential pool of Sensual Sin,
Crept inch by inch upon him ; to the core
Each nobler impulse withered, and within
The mind's waste garden, girded round of yore
By holy aspirations, a foul blight
Hung like the pall that circles Hell with night.

LXXIII.

The flowers no longer shed their sweets for him,
For him, the winds no tender secret brought,
The very stars in Heaven looked wan and dim,
Seen through the tainted shadows of his thought ;
He walked a hideous realm of phantasy,
Swayed by a sullen gloom, or desperate glee.

LXXIV.

Thus sunk, thus hopeless, this pale prodigal
Of the soul's priceless treasure, on an Eve,
Whose breath came chill like Autumn's, and the fall
Of whose sad footsteps a low dirge did weave
With faint elegiac breezes, sat beside
His leman in the daylight's ebbing tide.

LXXV.

To hers he would have pressed his feverish lips,
Her willing breast was free to his embrace,
When the quick shadow of a sharp eclipse
Came o'er the purple passion of her face ;
Her eyes were fixed with a wild, marblé stare
On space, and some momentous vision there.

LXXVI.

Philemon with a sudden, shuddering thrill,
Followed her palsied looks, till he could see,
Down dropping thro' the mist-wreaths, bright and still,
An Image of divine serenity ;
Whose lucent, pitying, melancholy eyes,
Shone on him like reproachful memories.

LXXVII.

Between his Love and him the Presence stood,
With tender glance, and mien of gentlest power ;
The Evil Spirit cowered before the Good,
As Darkness cowers, when blooms the Morning Hour,
That rose from God's glad garden, that distils
Its living fragrance round a thousand hills.

LXXVIII.

A sound like the far rush of wings uprose,
O'ermastering Silence, gathering mightily,
As when great flocks of birds with measured blows
Of powerful vans sweep o'er the solemn sea :
Then came the thunder-peal, the fiery levin,
As if a star had burst its bounds in Heaven.

LXXIX.

And down from crystal battlement to base,
The enchanted Palace crumbled into dust,
To blackness sank the beauty and the grace
With which the Goddess veiled the home of Lust ;
Whence for an instant shot a deadly glare,
Flashed from the eyes of some demoniac Fear.

LXXX.

Philemon sought his Guide, from her to ask
Fit consolation in this dread extreme,
But the fair Angel had performed her task,
And now, faint, fading upward as a dream,
Her white plumes shamed the clouds, whose dense array,
Closed into silvery splendors round her way.

LXXXI.

But when the form receded to a pale,
Impalpable shade, like ghosts of clouds that pass
Across the Moon, winged by a noiseless gale,
Or the weird mist that shrouds the Wizard's glass,
A solemn voice stole on him from afar,
Like music melting from some mournful Star.

LXXXII.

‘ Poor Priest of Passion ! thou hast fed the fire
On the fierce Altar builded in thy breast,
Consumed the wings of every grand Desire,
And scorned the Seraph whose sweet love had blest ;
Thy soul hath lost its God-ward impulse long,
And thou art dead to Crown, and Palm, and Song.

LXXXIII.

‘ Look back ! O fallen man, and mark the way
Thy pliant footsteps were not loth to tread,
While blushed the aureole of a perfect day,
And Christ's last word of grace was almost said,
Which, uttered once, the awful veil is riven,
That sways between our mortal sight and Heaven.

LXXXIII.

‘ Look back ! O fallen man, and mark the bloom
That blossomed on thy childhood’s golden sky,
Bent like a bow of promise o’er the boom
Of life’s uncertain Sea — a melody
Most glorious sounded from those shining waves,
But now the tide seems moaning over — graves.

LXXXV.

‘ The graves of all thy upright soul had borne
Well pleasing to the Angels — desolate now
The brooding waters — stagnant, and forlorn
The sky, that laughed once, like a happy brow ;
And ere thy noon, the sad years sin-oppressed,
Are rushing blackly downward to the West.

LXXXVI.

‘ Go forth to find thy crime’s just recompense,
Go forth to meet the Sorrow and the Shame,
Which to the Souls who canonize the SENSE,
Cling ever, like fierce Serpents born of flame,
Draw in earth’s lowest Air thy laboring breath,
And learn the full significance of death.

LXXXVII.

‘ Yet from the ruin of thy low estate,
A penitential patience hath sufficed
To plume the heart for the Empyrean gate,
And the serene benignity of Christ ;
In humbleness and prayer work out thy doom,
Till Glory trembles from the depths of Gloom.

LXXXVIII.

‘ Then may’st thou face the Beautiful, and bare
Thy willing spirit in the starry sea
Of still Beatitudes, — then may’st thou share
Our God’s high Noon of Immortality,
And drink from His grand eyes that burn above,
The quenchless light and perfect peace of love.’

SONNETS.

LIFE AND DEATH.

LIFE.

SUFFERING ! and yet magnificent in pain !
Mysterious ! yet, like Spring-showers in the sun,
Veiling the light with their melodious rain,
LIFE, from the world beyond hath radiance won :
Its gloomiest phase is as the clouds that mourn
'Neath the majestic brightness of the Arch,
Where nobler orbs in deathless daylight burn,
And God's great pulses beat their music march.
The Heaven we worship dimly girt with tears,
The Spirit-heaven, what is it but a Life,
Lifting its soul beyond our mortal years
That oft begin, and ever end with strife ;
Strife we must pass to win a happier height,
NATURE but travails to reveal us — light.

DEATH.

Then whence, O ! Death, thy dreariness ? We know
That every flower, the breezes' flattering breath
Woos to a blush, and love-like murmuring low,
Dies but to multiply its bloom in death :
The rill's glad, prattling infancy, that fills
The woodlands with its song of innocent glee,
Is passing through the heart of shadowy hills,
To swell the eternal manhood of the sea ;
And the great stars, Creation's minstrel-fires,
Are rolling toward the central source of light,
Where all their separate glory but expires
To merge into one world's unbroken might ;
There is no death but change, soul claspeth soul,
And all are portion of the immortal whole.

ON THE REFUSAL OF THE LEGISLATURE OF A NEIGHBORING STATE
TO APPROPRIATE ANY AMOUNT FOR THE ERECTION OF A MON-
UMENT TO THE MEMORY OF A DISTINGUISHED STATESMAN.

I.

YE cannot add by any pile YE raise,
One jot or tittle to the Statesman's fame ;
That the world knows — to the far-future days
Belongs his glory, and its radiant flame
Will burn, when ye are dead, decayed, forgot ;
Therefore, your opposition matters not ;
The thin-masqued jealousies of present time,
Unburied in his grave, survive to keep
Rampant the hate HE deemed his highest praise,
And the rude clash of discord o'er his sleep,
But for his great, wise acts, his faith sublime,
All that the soul of genius sanctifies,
These mount where viler passions cannot climb,
These live where palsied malice faints and dies.

II.

Still must the common voice denounce the deed,
The common heart swell with an outraged pride,
That the poor purchase of the paltry meed
His country owed him, should be thus denied ;
Shame on the Senate ! Shame on every hand
Which did not falter when recording there
The basest act achieved for many a year,
To fire the scorn of the whole Southern land ;
Nor the South only, for our foes will cry,
' Out ! on your petty, pasteboard chivalry ;
The people who refuse to crown the great
And good with honor, do themselves eclipse,
And doubly shameless is the recreant State,
Whose condemnation comes from her own lips.'

SEPARATION.

OH ! nevermore on earth, nor yet in Heaven,
Shall I behold thee ? — if the crystal light
That suns the palms of Paradise, is given
To my freed vision, when the awful Night
Of Sin's purgation closes, as — it must,
(For in God's Providence, we humbly trust,
Sin cannot be immortal) * — even then,
Amid that multitudinous company,
That throng of thronèd Powers, and ransomed men,
O ! nevermore thy saint-like eyes to see,
Shining too far above me in the dome
Of Christ's new firmament, would only be,
Companionless and lorn through Heaven to roam,
To walk the golden Streets, but not — of home.

* “It suits not the eternal laws of Good,
That Evil be immortal” —

T O ——— .

LOVE ! to thy heart as to a secret shrine,
Veiled with the awe of deepest sanctity,
From the o'erchargèd clouds of Fate I fly,
And find a refuge and a peace divine ;
Then, let the tempest thunder wide and far,
Beyond the storm which Pain, and Want combined,
Have raised to 'whelm my manhood and my mind,
Thy steadfast virtues, like a guardian-star,
Point to the realms ' where the Eternal are,'
While thy calm love with a transcendent light,
Yet mellowed to the chastity of Night,
— My God's sweet benediction, thus expressed, —
Burns in my soul, and mantles warm and bright,
O'er Grief's sad brow, till Grief itself grows blest.

SHELLEY.

BECAUSE they thought his doctrines were not just,
Mankind assumed for him the chastening rod,
And Tyrants reared in pride, and strong in lust,
Wounded the noblest of the sons of God ;
The heart's most cherished benefactions riven,
They strove to humble, blacken and malign,
A soul whose charities were wide as Heaven,
Whose *deeds*, if not his *doctrines*, were divine ;
And in the name of HIM, whose sunshine warms
The evil as the righteous, deemed it good
To wreak their bigotry's relentless storms
On one whose nature was not understood.
Ah ! well ! God's ways are wondrous, — it may be
His seal hath not been set to man's decree.

OCTOBER.

THE passionate Summer's dead ! the sky's a-glow,
With roseate flushes of matured desire,
The winds at eve are musical and low,
As sweeping chords of a lamenting lyre,
Far up among the pillared clouds of fire,
Whose pomp of strange procession upward rolls,
With gorgeous blazonry of pictured folds,
To celebrate the Summer's past renown ;
Ah, me ! how regally the Heavens look down,
O'ershadowing beautiful autumnal woods,
And harvest fields with hoarded increase brown,
And deep-toned majesty of golden floods,
That raise their solemn dirges to the sky,
To swell the purple pomp that floateth by.

TO ——— .

BELOVED ! in this holy hush of night,
I know that thou art looking to the South,
Thy alabaster brow bathed in the light
Of tender Heavens, and o'er thy delicate mouth
A dewy gladness from thy dark eyes shed ;
O ! eloquent eyes, that on the evening spread
The glory of a radiant world of dreams,
(The inner moonlight of the soul that dims
This moonlight of the sense,) and o'er thy head,
Thrown back, as listening to a voice of hymns,
Perchance in thine own spirit, violet gleams
From modest flowers that deck the window-bars,
While the Winds sigh, and sing the far-off streams,
And a faint bliss seems dropping from the Stars.

II.

O! pour thy inmost soul upon the Air,
And trust to Heaven the secrets that recline
In the sweet nunnery of thy virgin breast ;
Speak to the Winds that wander everywhere, —
And sure must wander hither — the divine
Contentment, and the infinite, deep rest
That sway thy passionate being, and lift high
To the calm realm of Love's Eternity,
The passive Ocean of thy charmèd Thought ;
And tell the Ariel element to bear
The burden of thy whispered heart to me,
By Fairy alchemy of distance wrought
To something sacred as a saintly prayer,
A spell to set my nobler nature free.

LINES.

LOVE ! a life-long mist of sorrow,
Lifted from my pathway now,
Not a cloud remains in shadow,
On my heart, or on my brow ;
Crowned by thee, imperial Passion
Thrills all space with starry light,
And our misery's baffled demons,
Vanish with the waning night.

'Neath the rays of this new Splendor,
Drooping hopes like flowers expand,
And my soul is wild with music,
Fainting from Elysian-land ;
Scarcely can the Angels hymning
Praise, where Bliss and Glory meet,
Utter by the streams of Adenne
Strains more solemn and more sweet.

Solemn ! for they come a prelude
To the strife, where still we may
Keep our spirits white and blameless,
As in life's auroral day ;
Sweet ! because they murmur gently,
Like a voice whose silver tone
Falls as fall the shaded fountains,
In the wild-woods, dim and lone.

Dost thou ask me if I love thee ?
Ay ! with love our God hath given,
Strong to scorn man's false conventions,
Saintly, like the love in Heaven :
Do I love thee ? — ah ! divinest,
Human language faints and dies,
While the pale lips strive to falter
What speaks only in the eyes.

There are solemn depths of Passion,
Whose divine, sonorous roll,
Maketh Passion's self to ponder,
Listening to her own great soul ;
Depths, undiscovered, untranslated,
Tremulous as a voice of tears,
But sublime as that high chorus,
Pealing from the march of spheres.

Come, Belovèd ! clasp me closer,
Let me feel thy faithful breast,
Panting with a tropic rapture,
Sinking to a trancèd rest ;
Sit we here with amorous Twilight
Broken into dusky bars,
And a chastened shower of glory
Raining round us from the stars.

EXTRACT FROM AN UNFINISHED POEM CALLED THE
‘SOUL UNBOUND.’

THE passionate sobs of the dear friends that came
To look their last upon my living frame,
And catch the fainting accents of my breath,
That fluttered in the Atmosphere of death,
Were hushed to silence, — and the uncertain light,
That flickered o’er the arras to my sight,
Grew paler and more tremulous, as Life
Sunk ’neath the power of that unequal strife,
Which pits humanity against the spell
Of the most awful Chamberlain of Hell.

I could not see my foe : but the whole space
Was redolent of pestilence, and grace
Of all things beautiful, and grand and free,
Secmed lost in darkness evermore to me, —

I struggled with the invisible arm, that wound
So sternly round me, but could give no sound
To the great agony that welmed my soul
In surges blacker than the eternal roll
Of a world's waters, thundering round the Pole.

Downward — still downward — the relentless hand
Pressed on my being, and the ron wand
Of a grim, dread enchantment, struck my heart,
With a dull force that made the life-blood start
Forever from its courses : then a sense
Of coming rest, more dreamless and intense
Than ever wrapped mortality, in still
And throbless freedom from the thoughts of ill,
Stole o'er the vanquished form and glimmering sight,
Till Silence ruled, with Nothingness and Night.

THE PORTRAIT.

THE laughing Hours before her feet,
And scattering spring-time roses,
And the voices in her soul are sweet
As Music's mellowed closes ;
All Hopes and Passions, heavenly-born,
In her, have met together,
And Joy diffuses round her morn
A mist of golden weather.

As o'er her cheek of delicate dyes,
The blooms of childhood hover,
So do the tranced, and sinless eyes,
All childhood's heart discover ;
Full of a dreamy happiness,
With rainbow fancies laden,
Whose arch of promise glows to bless
Her spirit's beauteous Adenne.

She is a being born to raise
Those undefiled emotions,
That link us with our sunniest days,
And most sincere devotions ;
In her, we see renewed and bright,
That phase of earthly story,
Which glimmers in the morning light,
Of God's exceeding glory.

Why, in a life of mortal cares,
Appear these heavenly faces,
Why, on the verge of darkened years,
These amaranthine graces?
'T is but to cheer the soul that faints
With pure and blest evangels,
To prove, if Heaven is rich with Saints,
That Earth may have her Angels.

Enough ! 't is not for me to pray
That on her life's sweet river,
The calmness of a virgin day
May rest, and rest forever ;
I know a guardian Genius stands
Beside those waters lowly,
And labors with immortal hands
To keep them pure and holy.

THE ISLES OF THE BLEST.

'MID the sparkling waves of the distant West,
Where the sun sinks down to his evening rest,
And his parting beams on the waters play,
God's visible smile from the courts of day,
O! never beheld by mortal eyes,
A cloudless and beautiful country lies —

That unknown land ! It sometimes seems
In the marvellous faith of my mystic dreams,
That I tread its shores of gradual slope,
And drink the joy of a nameless hope,
Entranced with the magic of birds, whose lay,
Like the voices of angels far away,
Floats ever on wings of the charmed breeze,
From the roseate heights, and the woodland leas,
And thrilled with the flash of plumes that rise
In purple sweep to the tranquil skies.

O, joy ! to walk on the blossoming wolds,
While the heart of the shadowy wood unfolds,
Where the Hamadryad is wont to dwell,
And oreads bound through the bosky dell,
And the music of pipes that are low and sweet,
Steals gently after the Dreamer's feet.

O, joy ! to pause by the lake's green side,
And gaze adown in the crystal tide,
Where Naiads twine their golden hair,
In a depth of waters, calm and fair,
And the winds mysterious murmurs bear
From a viewless host in the halls of Air,
That sound as the silver rain of rills,
From the dreamy deeps of the heavenly hills.

Ever do mild-eyed Memories throng,
To that radiant realm of bloom and song,
I inhale the sweets of ungathered flowers,
The blended balm of a thousand bowers,
Loading the sighs of the languid Hours, —
And a veil of trance, serene and deep,
Enfolds my life like an Eden sleep.

When a saintly Faith hath plumed her flight
To a Mount of Visions' awful height,
I have traced, in that shadowy clime of bliss,
The forms beloved of my soul in this ;
Eyes that had broken my peace in youth,
Come back with the warm, deep light of truth,
Eloquent eyes of a grand, calm ray,
For Passion and Pride have lost their sway,
Earthly feeling hath passed away,
Save the still delight of its nobler part,
The deathless love of a trustful heart.

'Tis sweet to know, when the world grows cold,
And the years of a wearisome life are told,
When the thin blood courseth chill and slow,
And the soul 'is o'ershadowed with heavy wo,
That the Pilgrim of earth may find a rest,
In the far-off seas of the golden West,
The beautiful Isles of the ever-blest.

THE CATARACT.

BY DAY.

THIS solemn warfare of mysterious waves,
This sobbing gush of a Titanic grief,
The earth's great heart unto the listening winds,
Hath wailed forth through the awed Eternities,
Whose wings have shuddered o'er it as they past :
From multitudinous fountains in the depths
Of cavernous glooms, roll the exhaustless floods,
Thence startled in some immemorial shock
Of earthquake and of tempest, some dread strife
Of orb with orb in the black void of Heaven,
When ocean-tides rushed over Continents,
And mountains tottered to chaotic fall,
And the majestic roar of elements
Shook the crazed Air, and the affrighted Space
Quivered beneath the burden of the blast.

The vexèd waters whirled from bursting veins,
That coursed the tortured world's disrupted frame,
Hissing their separate fury on the storm, —

The weaker fountains, and mild cataracts,
Lessened their flow, the green wolds bloomed once
more,
But unrestrained this universe of tides,
With voice of warning and of prophecy,
Speaks to us of what *hath been*, and *may be*.

From the reverberant Hell that groans below,
Ev'n from that Hell tumultuous floats to Heaven,
The balmy incense of the Beautiful ;
Empurpled mists the sunshine woos to glory,
Mounting, like ransomed souls, to the GREAT SOUL,
And lost in grand beatitudes of light.

BY NIGHT.

Lo ! the calm Moon ! She cometh like a saint,
To charm the passionate turmoil into rest,
Till to the sense of airy phantasy,
The pealing surges struggle with strange awe,
Pierced by the effluence of the rainbow-span,
That girds the Thunderer with an arch of tears.

Those heavenly beams, so eloquently fair,
Shine on the frenzied, maddening mass beneath,
Like the ineffable pity in the eyes
Of the disowned and melancholy Christ,
When, from the Ruler's Porch, he mutely looked
On the blaspheming crew that cursed his love,
In the thronged streets of doomed Jerusalem.

A FRAGMENT.

A FAIRIE soul wafted by God's own breath,
And fluttering from his Paradise of light,
Paused on the earth not many lustra since ;
The soul was spotless as the angels are,
And its fair being thrilled yet with the touch
Of the immortal fingers, as they clasped
Its whiteness, glistening in eternity.
It struck a thrill of hope in happy hearts,
That beat to the blest melodies of home,
And seemed to add to the sweet household chords,
(Whose voice is the true music of the world,)
A golden string brought from a harp in heaven.

But things from God grow darkened with a blight
Whene'er they fall on the sin-blasted earth —
The soul that trembled into a strange life,
All dumb from the great glory of the Throne,

Hath trod the ways, and speaks the tongue of man ;
Hath lost the mute, deep reverence, that hung
Like a celestial atmosphere of prayer
Round the pale purity just born in heaven ;
And the bright home o'er which the Cherubim
Chaunted soft anthems, hath Decay enforced
To be the wanton of all winds that blow :
The pillar, and the pride of that charmed sphere,
The strong Corinthian column crowned with grace,
Fell like a green young monarch of the woods,
Struck by a sudden whirlwind ; and the dove,
The innocent dove, that brooded in its shade,
And clung to the deep shelter of its arms,
Hath fluttered wounded to the dreary earth,
And mourns the tenement that moulders near.

Such are thy works, O Fate ! and such thy will :
Thou art a Tyrant absolute in power,
But for a righteous purpose ; God hath thrown
The burden of his judgments in thy hand,
To blast the pride of our humanity ;
But in the far-off systems of the blest,
The cycles that are endless as their King,
Fate ! the mysterious Conqueror of the Past,
The Present's incubus, the Future's storm,

Shorn of his gloominess, and freed from ties
Of the dark regency that God had given,
Will walk a glad immortal in the light
Of happier constellations, — even now,
Oftimes, beneath his habitude of hate,
We see the angel glory gleaming through.

LINES.

A TENDER word outspoken,
A tender glance returned,
And thoughtless peace was broken,
And quenchless passion burned.

Thenceforth, forever after,
Shadows filled her eyes,
And a low, sad laughter,
Like the sweet uprise
Of melodious fountains
'Mid the Elf-land mountains,
Fell from her, in seeming
Of enraptured dreaming,
Caught from trancèd skies.

How the holy story,
Her deep heart's mystery,
Like a chastened glory,

Beautiful to see,
Shone forth, softly, faintly,
With a radiance saintly,
From each pensive feature —
[Oh ! divinest Nature,
Once bound up in me !]

Well do I remember
That fair Italian face,
But a drear December
Hath eclipsed its grace ;
December of the stormy scorn,
Of folly and of madness born,
That season of infuriate weather,
When Love and Hope went down together.

SUNSET.

THERE is a solemn pomp along the Heaven,
That deepens in the sunset ; Day hath drawn
A host of bannered glories round his path,
And sinks, defying Darkness, with a crown,
Whose light *should be* immortal, and the robe,
The gorgeous robe of his imperial state,
Spread with a purple splendor round his fall.

He dies as monarch hearts alone can die,
Unconquered to the last : the clouds that clung
Around his pathway all this dreary morn,
Dispart at length, and through the breathless air,
The vast vault of this firmament of peace,
They that had veiled his brightness, share his light,
The wide light of his proud, majestic eyes,
And what before was worthless, takes the hues,
That mount an arch of triumph in the skies.

Ah! thus it is with Genius! — when the flame
Wanes to its setting, and the envious clouds,
That Wrong, and Falsehood, Treachery, and Hate,
Raised to obscure it, can no more withstand
The grand blaze of its concentrated power,
They part, like billows from a prow of gold,
And awe-struck by the greatness of their sin,
Only survive, because the master-fire
Darts such an universal radiance round,
That they lie blushing in that glorious smile,
Whose scorn is mightier than its death is sad.

LINES.

THIS is the place — I pray thee, friend,
Leave me alone with that dread GRIEF,
Whose raven wings o'erarch the grave,
Closed on a life how sad and brief.

Already the young violets bloom
On the light sod that shrouds her form,
And Summer's awful sunshine strikes
Incongruous on the spirit's storm.

She died, and did not know that I,
Whose heart is breaking in this gloom,
Had shrined her love, as pilgrims shrine
A blossom from some saintly tomb.

And ah ! indeed it *was* a tomb,
The tomb of Hope, so ghastly-gray,
Whence sprung that flower of love that grew
Serenely on the Hope's decay ;

A pallid flower that bloomed alone,
With no warm light to keep it fair,
But nurtured by the tears that fell,
Ev'n from the clouds of our despair —

She perished, and her patient soul
Passed to God's rest, nor did she know
I kept the faith, — we could not plight
In honor, or in peace below.

But Edith ! now, all, all is clear,
You see the flame of that fierce fate,
Which blazed between my life, and yours,
And left both — desolate.

And well you comprehend that now
My heart is breaking where I stand,
But 'mid the ruin, shrines its faith,
A relic from love's Holy Land.

STANZAS.

TO J. S.

WHEN Darkness encompassed my senses and soul,
And the breath of the Pestilence over me stole,
When the eyes of the Fearful looked misty and dim,
When Love breathed a prayer, and Devotion a hymn,
When the clouds of the Present around me unfurled,
And my glance like a spirit's was turned from the world ;
There was One, and scarce less than a spirit was she,
Whose smile fell upon me like light on the sea —
And bore back the waves of my fate as they rolled,
Where Eternity's Day-star just bathed them in gold.

All else were desponding — all else were in tears ;
From beneath me seemed gliding the Threshold of years,
A rest — as of death brooded sad o'er the room,
And the low air was heavy with sickly perfume ;

The Destroyer's wan sceptre o'ershadowed my heart,
And I thought that the Angels stood gazing apart,
And signed me to come, but an Angel more dear,
All bright with mortality's sweetness, was near,
And I turned from the beauty of Adenne to see,
Life, Hope, and Passion, brought earthward by thee.

LINES.

WILT thou come hither, gentlest fair,
And lift thy soft blue eyes to mine ?
The quiet smile that gleameth there,
Wells upward from the fountain, where
All fresh young fancies shine.

The fountain of unsullied light,
Which sparkles in each human soul,
Ere Passion's pestilential blight
Falls with the blackness of the night,
Where those sweet waters roll.

With what a calm regardfulness,
Thy tender eyes do watch my own,
No shadowy portend of distress,
Cometh to make their joyance less,
Soon to be overblown.

* * * * *

Better those delicate limbs should sleep
 Beneath the emerald burial sod,
Ere wo hath taught thine eyes to weep —
If thus the *heart* secures the deep
 Eternal peace of God.

Mournfullest of the mournful things,
 That raise our sighs, and move our tears,
Is innocence, that earthward brings
The semblance of angelic wings,
 To drop like leaves in Autumn years.

Then Father ! summon to the blest
 Embracement of thy love in Heaven,
This meek soul, ere the world's unrest,
And passionate sins do stand confest,
 So broadly, they be scarce forgiven.

THE REALM OF REST.

WITHIN the realm that Nature boundeth,
Are there balmy shores of peace,
Where no passion-torrent soundeth,
And no storm-wind seeks release ?
Rest they 'mid the waters golden,
Of some strange untravelled sea,
Where low, Halcyon winds have stolen,
Lingering round them slumbrously ?

Shores begirt by purple hazes,
Varying with pale, mellowed beams,
Whose dim curtains shroud the mazes,
Wandering through a realm of dreams ;
Shores, where Silence woos Devotion,
Action faints, and Echo dies,
And each peace-entranced emotion
Feeds on quiet mysteries.

If there be, O ! guardian Master,
Genius of my life and fate,
Bear me from the world's disaster,
'Through that Kingdom's shadowy gate ;
Let me rest beneath its willows,
On the fragrant, flowering strand,
Lulled to sleep by murmurous billows,
Thrilled with airs of Elfin-land.

Slumber, flushed with faintest dreamings ;
Deep that knows no answering deep,
Unprofaned by phantom-seemings,
Which but leave the soul to weep ;
Noiseless, timeless, *half* forgetting ;
May that sleep Elysian be,
Whilst yet heavenlier tides are setting,
Inward, from the roseate sea.

Soft to mine a voice is calling,
Sweet as music-winds at night,
Gently sighing, faintly falling
From some wondrous, mystic height,
And it gives my soul assurance,
Of the land I long to know,
Nerving to a fresh endurance,
'Neath the present weight of wo.

‘ There ’s a Realm, thy footsteps nearing,
[Thus the voice to mine replies,]
‘ Where the heavy heart’s despairing
Gains its rest, and stops its sighs ;
’T is a realm, imperial, stately,
Refuge of dethronèd Years,
Calm as Midnight, towering greatly,
Through a moonlit mist of tears.

‘ Though an Empire, freedom reigneth,
Kingly brow, and subject knee,
Each with what to each pertaineth,
Slumbering in equality ;
’T is a sleep, divorced from dreamings,
Deep that knows no answering deep,
Unprofaned by phantom-seemings —
Noiseless, wondrous, timeless sleep.

‘ On its shores are weeping willows,
Action faints, and Echo dies,
And the languid dirge of billows,
Lulls with opiate symphonics ;
But beside that murmurous Ocean
All who rest, repose in sooth,
And no more the stilled emotion
Stirs to joy, or wakens ruth.

‘Thou *shalt* gain these blest dominions,
Thou *shalt* find this peaceful ground,
Shaded by Oblivion’s pinions,
Startled by no mortal sound ;
Noiseless, timeless, ALL forgetting,
Shall thy sleep Elysian be,
Whilst eternal tides are setting
Inward from that mystic sea.’

LINES.

THOU ! who hast wakened secret springs,
Deep in the verdure of my soul,
And stirred on many a fairy knoll,
In its dim shadows, purple wings

Of new, and fresh Desires, that rise,
Like eagles to the morning sun,
Thrilled with the hope to look upon
The splendor of the inner skies ;

Thy wondrous being, fair and good,
Revolves before me in the night
Of music, and the tender light
Of consummated womanhood.

As wandering orbs that meet in space,
Our spirits met, their wild career,
Transformèd in the homeless air
To circles of eternal grace.

And each renewed in bliss to move,
And each rejoicing to have met
A world of such sweet glory set,
In so divine a Heaven of love.

O! Souls! that breathe in mutual light,
Which, if divided or withdrawn,
Would leave indeed a doubtful dawn,
More dreary than the dreariest night.

Give us your subtlest sympathy,
For ours, that intellectual life,
Which blends even dissonance and strife
Into majestic harmony.

Through this charmed sphere to pass with thee,
Where Truth and Beauty wedded are,
And rounded to a silver star,
Poised on its own Eternity ;

Is all I ask, or hope, or dream,
More can a mortal life-time yield?
A foresight of an ampler field,
Outspread, where nobler glories gleam.

LINES.

[Written on Christmas-day, 1853, which fell upon the Sabbath.]

MYSTERY of mysteries ! on this holy morn,
The Prince of an eternal realm of love,
The Godhead veiled, in lowliest guise was born,
While the far heavenly music pealed above.

Triumph of triumphs ! this auspicious day,
The stern earth-agony subdued, and fled,
Beheld the dawn of his immortal sway,
The glorious resurrection from the dead.

In the long cycles that the years have run,
The course of their majestical advance,
Hath merged with solemn wedlock into one,
These sacred days' sublime significance.

The birth that oped to man the heavenly gate,
And gave far glimpses of supernal light,
The glory of that distant, fair estate,
Faded so long from his despondent sight ;

That birth was marvellous ! but strange and grand,
More strange and grand was the great Conqueror's rise
From the dim confines of the shadowy land,
Whose gloom had palsied faith, and dimmed the skies.

Thus did the mortal learn immortal trust,
Spurn the base ends for which his soul *had* striven,
Shake from his garment earth's degrading dust,
And hail a home and brotherhood in Heaven.

IMAGINATION AND MEMORY.

IMAGINATION is a God, who calls
Great globes of grandeur into golden light
From the dim desolation of the Night —
Who from incongruous chaos draws the law
Of order and completeness, and the awe
Of whose benignant Beauty fills the world ;
But Christ-like Memory stands within the halls
Of the sepulchral Past — which at the dread,
Deep summons of that voice, gives up its dead.

ON ———.

THY cheek hath lost its happy flush and bloom,
Thine eye its light;
And the fresh fragrance of life's flowery morn,
Alas ! hath vanished quite :

Pale the sweet garden, where a season since
The rose did blow ;
And haunted only by a tender shade,
A flitting, ghostly glow :

Solemn and spiritual, and very sad,
Like the far smile
That beams from the Madonna's face divine,
In some dim convent aisle.

The Earth to thee smiles only from her tombs —
Thou standest lone,
Where in thy darkened, and o'erclouded path,
Expiring joys are strewn :

Joys that have withered suddenly and dropped
 From stately stems
Of thy green Hopes, once beautiful, and crowned
 With dewy diadems :

And standing there all desolate, and lorn,
 Thy spirit grieves,
As grieve the winds of Autumn, at the fall
 Of Summer's wealth of leaves.

I gaze upon thy face, serene and fixed,
 Pallid and calm ;
Tranced with a vision of the land of rest,
 The Pilgrim's conquering palm.

Yet sometimes, turned from glory, thy sad soul
 Dissolves in tears —
When, like a loosened Falcon, Memory mounts
 Thy Heaven of youthful years.

Thy far-off Heaven of vanished years and youth,
 Where past delights
Shine in cold distance, like the freezing stars
 Of the pale Arctic nights.

Fading, and oh ! how faint and desolate,
 Thy form doth seem,
And hour by hour thy wan face waxeth dim,
 And shadowy as a dream.

The dream will melt from our horizon soon,
 In higher skies,
Already meanings, mystical and strange,
 Float in thine eyes.

And through those gentle lights, thy gentler soul
 Too well I know,
Is passing up in dimness and in tears
 From mortal wrong and wo.

MY FATHER.

MY FATHER ! in the mist-enshrouded Past,
My boyish thoughts have wandered o'er and o'er
To thy lone grave upon a distant shore,
The wanderer of the waters, still at last.

Never in boyhood have I blithely sprung
To catch my father's voice, or climb his knee ;
He was a constant Pilgrim of the sea,
And died upon it when his boy was young.

He perished not in conflict nor in flame,
No laurel garland rests upon his tomb ;
Wild were his days, and clouded was his doom,
Brief was his life, forgotten is his name.

Yet have I shrined his memory in my mind,
Yet have I wrought his image on my soul —
Though fancy-painted, a most perfect whole
Of sweet conceptions, deep, though dim-defined.

His careless bearing, and his manly face,
His frank, bold eye, his stern and stalworth form
Fitted to breast the fight, the wreck, the storm;
The sailor's *nonchalance*, the soldier's grace.

In dreams, in dreams we've mingled, and a swell
Of feeling mightier for the eye's eclipse,
The music of a blest Apocalypse,
Hath murmured through my spirit, like a spell.

Ah, then! oftimes a sadder scene will rise,
A gallant vessel through the mist-bound day,
Lifting her spectral spars above the bay,
Swayed gloomily against the glimmering skies.

O'er the dim billows thundering, peals a boom
Of the deep gun that bursteth as a knell,
When the brave tender to the brave farewell —
And strong arms bear a comrade to the tomb.

* * * * *

The opened sod: a sorrowing band beside —
One rattling roll of musketry, and then,
A man no more among his fellow-men,
Darkness his chamber, and the earth his bride,

My father sleeps in peace ; perchance more blest
Than some he left to mourn him, and to know
The bitter blight of an enduring wo,
Longing (how oft !) with him, to be at rest.

She whom his love sustained, the widowed one,
Is living still, but all her promised years
Have floated o'er a gloomy gulf of tears,
Illumined not by starlight, nor by sun.

And *I*, who should have been her age's stay,
Strewing the mourner's rugged road with flowers,
The music of her life's declining hours —
I have but darkened all her desolate way.

And now I know the Pilgrim's path is trod ;
A season more, and the celestial Gate
Will open for her, where the angels wait,
To bear the ' heavy laden ' up to God.

And when thou goest, sweet mother ! and the gleams
From sapphire thrones are round thy footsteps spread ;
When the last offspring of thy Grief is dead,
Plead for me there, by the Eternal streams : —

For it may be a stronger, purer light,
From the far confines of that saintly clime,
Shall pour upon the dreary paths of time,
And the wronged human heart be judged aright.

Then, hand in hand with Him, thy spirit's Lord,
Thine earthly lover, and thy heavenly friend,
Will the Immortal for the Mortal bend,
And pray I too may share thy great reward.

THE GOLDEN AGE.

'Saturn, after having been deprived of his destructive power, escaped the fate of the other 'Titans, and fled to the plains of Latium, where he concealed himself, and transferred thither the Golden Age — that happy period when mankind lived in a state of perfect equality, and all things were in common. He is said to have arrived in a ship at the Tiber, in the dominions of Janus, and in union with him to have reigned over men with wisdom and benignity.'
— *Dwight's Mythology*.

A SHIP with lofty prow came down
 To Latium's strand —
A God had burst from severed chains,
 To rule the land.

Plenty and smiling Peace sprung up
 Beneath his tread —
Earth blossomed like Hesperian fields —
 Discord was dead.

Heaven, with its calm, supernal light,
 Had blessed the spot —
And Misery in the enchanted realm,
 Durst enter not.

Life passed away, like holy dreams
On spring-tide eves —
And melted as the sunset melts
From violet leaves.

From haunted wood-shades genii flew,
In twilights dim —
Nature and human hearts drank deep
Their 'wilderer hymn.

Earth, air and heaven entrancèd were —
A cloudless clime
Hung, like transparent dews, around
That Golden Time.

Those golden years have passed, to come
In purer light —
Their hopes that sleep, but are not dead,
Will chase the night.

TIME from the dungeon-vault of SIN
Will strongly burst,
And glorious in his wrath cast off
His chains accurst.

A God will reach from viewless realms
This mortal shore,
And dark-robed Misery flee his face,
Forevermore.

THE EVE OF THE BRIDAL.

AND hath it come, that strange, o'ermastering Hour,
When blushing Hope, and tender, tremulous Fears
Sway the full heart with a divided power,
Alternate sunshine and alternate tears ?

O ! for a spell to charm away thy care,
As I could charm were I but near thee now,
Chiding with lightsome laughter the despair, —
That girlish, coy despair that dusks thy brow. .

A fitful shade that dims the flush of joy,
Like those transparent clouds in summer days,
That cast a silvery shadow, and destroy
The else unveilèd noon's too dazzling blaze ;

Yet, from the fair hills of this foreign shore,
I waft thee benedictions on the wind,
Hopes, that a peaceful Bliss forevermore
May rule the golden Empire of thy mind.

And blessing thus, the darkening distance dies,
And in a grander than Agrippa's glass,
— The enamored Fancy, — a pale picture lies,
Brightening to shape and beauty ere it pass.

A room where sunset's glory faint and dim,
Girds the rich chamber with luxurious grace,
Rounds the fair outline of each delicate limb,
And crowns with mellowed lustre thy sweet face, —

In graceful folds thy loose robes, soft and rare,
Swell with the passionate heaving of thy breast,
O'er whose young loveliness, the entranced Air,
More golden seeming, seeks voluptuous rest.

Thy hand — in two brief hours no longer thine —
Gleams by a damask curtain, filled with sighs,
And the full, star-like tears begin to shine
In the blue heaven of thy bewildering eyes.

Tears for the girlhood, almost past away,
Its innocent life, its wealth of tender lore,
Tears for the womanhood, whose opening day,
Glimmering, reveals the untried scene before.

Not bitter tears ! for him thou lov'st is true,
And all thy being trembles into flame,
A soft, delicious flame that thrills thee through,
Whene'er thy spirit whispers his dear name.

Ev'n now I see thee turn thy timid head,
Luxuriant-locked, towards a dim retreat,
Where twilight shadows veil thy bridal bed,
And golden Gloom, and amorous Silence meet.

But hark ! a step ! with quick, alarmèd start,
Gathering thy garb about thee in mute haste,
I see thee standing with ripe lips apart,
And wealth of tresses lavished in sweet waste.

A step ! it is the approach of her, whose hands
[Dear hands] long to array thee for the rite,
Which draws around thy life the welcome bands
Of wedded joys and duties, born to-night.

She comes ! and soon enrobèd in fair guise,
Fresh as a rose the summer winds have wooed,
Thou goest to pledge thy faith in low replies,
And leave for aye thy virgin solitude.

And Peace go with thee, as thy steps depart,
Blest be all sinless passion, like to thine,
And Heaven's divinest Angels guard the heart,
The inviolate heart, where true Love builds a shrine.

ASPIRATIONS.

To have the will to soar, but not the wings, —
Eyes fixed forever on a starry height,
Where stately shapes of grand imaginings
Flash down the splendors of imperial light ;

And yet to lack the charm that makes them ours,
Th' obedient vassals of that conquering spell,
Whose omnipresent and ethereal powers,
Encircle Heaven, nor fear to enter Hell ;

This is the doom of Tantalus — the thirst
For beauty's balmy fount to quench the fires
Of the wild passion that our soul hath nurst
In hopeless promptings — unfulfilled desires.

Yet would I rather in the outward state
Of Song's immortal Palace lay me down,
A beggar basking by that golden gate,
Than bend beneath the haughtiest Empire's crown.

For sometimes, through the bars, my tranced eyes
Have caught the vision of a life divine,
And seen a far, mysterious rapture rise
Beyond the veil that guards the inmost shrine.

LINES.

WE walk, unconscious, blind Somnambulists,
All girded round with the dull mist of dreams,
Among the shadows of our shifting years ;
Blindly we stumble onward, step by step,
Near the precipitous edges of our Fate,
Nor deem how many footfalls, or how few,
Divide us from the fearful gulf that waits,
— A Horror, ghastly with mysterious glooms, —
To overwhelm us in its dim, Tartarean depths.

We gaze on beauty, but while yet our eyes
With the bright drops of rapture overflow,
The beauty wanes, and passes into Heaven ;
Till at the last, we learn to look beneath
The blush that masks, and mark the stealthy worm,
And all the loveliest Images of earth
Grow mournful to our sad Philosophy.

Only, irradiate with the dews of youth,
And its empurpling atmosphere of joy,
Our false Life puts a Halcyon glory on ;
O ! golden-tinted years, when in the sky
We see bright shapes, and hear a tender voice
Of benediction, when the Winds reveal
Their mystic thoughts to our attuned ears,
And not a violet blossoms on the lea,
And not a leaf is quivering in the light,
And not a song of any bird that flies
By the lone beach, or through the woodland aisles,
But comes the special delegate of Heaven,
To strike a morning sunshine on the soul.

But soon, the early splendor pales and dies,
But soon, the flowers, the woodlands, the glad birds,
No longer own a blest Interpreter ;
But treacherous Sin, with heavy-lidded Grief
Close following after, brands the Universe
With the funereal blazonry of wo.

O ! grant me but once more, for the last time,
Ere falls the black Night weltering in its shades,
The gift of childhood's glorious Alchemy,
That turns even gloom to gladness, and the dross,

(Or what we wise Philosophers term dross)
Of lowliest things, to golden mines of bliss ;
O ! give me back BELIEF, the unfaltering TRUST
In man, in Nature, and in Providence,
That arched the Air with rainbows, and the earth
Thrilled with the music of harmonious tongues,
Till in the multitudinous forms of being,
The humblest to the highest, I may find
One soul of beauty, and one voice of God.

ANTIPATHIES.

Love is no product of the obedient will,
It hath its root in those deep sympathies,
Mere ties of blood are powerless to control ;
I love thee not because around thy heart
An Arctic nature hath built up the ice
Of thawless winter : — vain it is to strive
Against the law of just Antipathies :
The Tropic sunlight burns not at the Poles,
Nor blooms the lustrous foliage of the East
Among the rocky, storm-bound Hebrides ;
To all *my* Gods thou art antipodal,
Therefore, again, Good Sir ! — I love thee not.

TO ———.

THY life hath been a warfare from the first,
But one by one thou hast besieged and burst
The iron gates of Prejudice, and wrung
Tardy confession from an enemy's tongue,
Of the just might of genius and of will,
Against their petty instruments of ill —
The sneer of ignorance, and the scorn of pride,
The blinded, arrogant folly that would ride
Rough-shod o'er merit, and the pomp of place
That fain would deem it somewhat of disgrace
To bend its shallow dignity — and know
It doth *receive* an honor, not *bestow*,
When one whom God hath gifted with the dower
Of lofty foresight, and rich words of power,
Accepts that homage which a luminous Fate
Decrees the Small must render to the Great.
At last upon thy brow, despite of them,
Fame sets her broad, imperial diadem,
And not a jewel blazes in that crown,
But gleams a separate scorn to quail them down.

MISCONSTRUCTION.

* How man misjudges man ! the outward seeming,
Gesture, or glance, or utterance, that may jar
Against some petty, pampered, poor conceit,
Unworthy, undefined, is straightway made
To prove a vast obliquity of soul,
And shallow disputants, with ponderous show
Of judgment, that provokes the wise to scorn,
Exalt the virtuous by the foul abuse
Which damns THEM to the level of their speech.

A FRAGMENT.

TRUTH, like Death, bends a stern gaze on man,
And in the awful calmness of her eyes,
Fate sits, a shrouded, solitary God,
Glooming the depths of their Eternity.

NOTES.

NOTE 1. Page 17.

THE veracious 'Father of History,' in his minute Egyptian researches, made it a matter of special inquiry, — 'how it came to pass that the Nile is the only one of all rivers that does not send forth breezes from its surface.' — *Euterpe*, 11.

NOTE 2. Page 17.

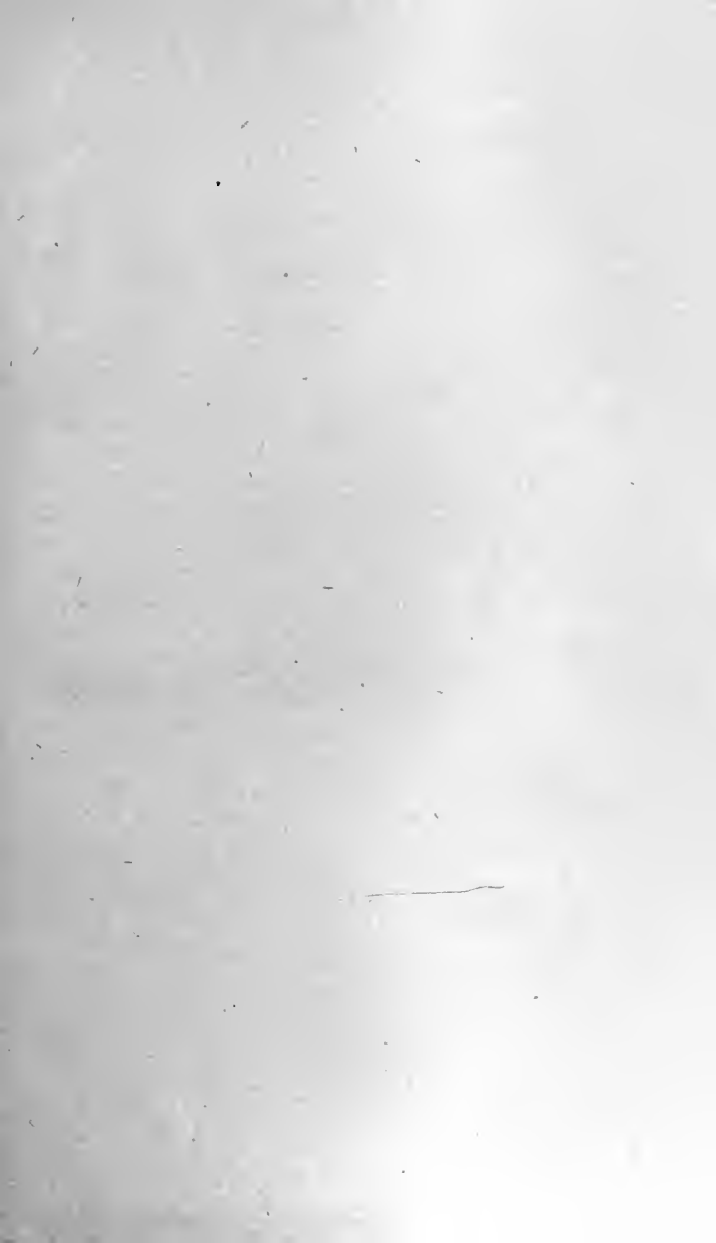
. . . Even if the supernatural element in the legend be not considered, it will scarcely be thought unwarrantable that the ruins of a Greek villa should be introduced on the borders of the desert, when we reflect that a large proportion of the inhabitants of Alexandria from its foundation were Greeks, and that nothing is more probable than that the wealthier classes among them should have indulged in the luxury of country retreats, accessible by a brief journey up the Nile.

NOTE 3. Page 20.

This apostrophe to the higher qualities of Aphrodite, is purposely placed in opposition to the grosser idea of the legend. Indeed it was not until the identification of the Greek Goddess

with the Roman Venus, that she became mostly a sensual Divinity. The Incarnation of love and beauty, and the representative of the eternal freshness and vivifying force of Nature, she appears the most exquisite and graceful conception in the marvellous Hellenic mythology; but the 'earthiness' of the Roman imagination was all-infecting, and under its transforming influence Aphrodite degenerated into a mere voluptuary. It was reserved for the Fathers to invest her with the additional honor of a *Fiendship*.







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